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WATER PURIFICATION PROBLEMS¹

By B. M. MOHLER

There are in Minnesota at the present time seventeen public water supplies which are receiving some kind of purification. Nine of these supplies are treated with chlorine gas only, two receive filtration and subsequent disinfection and six are subjected to sedimentation, filtration and disinfection.

The Duluth water supply is the only one of the group treated with chlorine only, the treatment of which is not difficult to properly control, the Lake Superior water showing only slight variations in physical characteristics. The other eight supplies in this group show considerable seasonal variation in organic content and are difficult of proper control, especially wherever facilities for necessary laboratory tests are lacking.

The Minnesota state board of health insists that purification of a contaminated public water supply by disinfection only is merely a temporary expedient and that a suitable system of filtration must be installed as soon as possible to supplement the disinfection treatment.

Seven of the seventeen supplies are treated with calcium hypochlorite solution while the remaining ten are disinfected with liquid chlorine. Trouble has been experienced in five instances by the sticking of the float in the meter of a certain type of chlorinator which necessitated the control of the flow of gas by weighing of the chlorine cylinder at stated intervals. This latter method of control is not accurate when there is any considerable variation in the amount of chlorine gas required. Experience has shown the need of keeping on hand a supply of duplicate parts for chlorinators. A duplicate chlorinator is desirable for use in cases of emergency.

¹ Abstract of paper before the Minnesota Section, November 10, 1917.